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18 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Meeting with DCI 15 October with Reference to NRO Budget

1. Dr. Wheelon, General Carter, and I met with the DCI at 1630 the afternoon of 15 October to review for him salient features of the Fiscal Year 1965 NRO budget as a means for preparing him for the his projected conversations on this subject with Under Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric in the near future. Dr. Wheelon made up a quick chart which showed the principal budget items involved in Programs A and B. There were two columnar presentations devoted to satellite and aircraft items.

2. The principal results of this meeting were as follows:

a. The Director said that he was content to let the covert satellite item requested for Program B. the advanced manned aircraft item in the same category, [REDACTED] all in the study phase for FY 1965.

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b. He directed that immediate steps be taken to divest the Agency of technical monitoring responsibility and eventual operational control in the TAGBOARD Program. He evidenced great and historical dissatisfaction with the whole TAGBOARD effort, and stated that he had repeatedly told the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Dr. Fubini, and others that he thought it was a wasteful and infeasible proposal. He asked why NRO had not sent someone over to assume technical responsibility for TAGBOARD, and when he was told that repeated efforts on our part had produced no one, he said that he wanted us to communicate his feelings to D/NRO and to insist that a responsible project officer be assigned to monitor this activity herewith. So great was his dissatisfaction with TAGBOARD that he said that once it

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was returned to Air Force control, meaning Program D, he would move heaven and earth to see that it was canceled entirely.

c. The Director said he felt that the question [ ] had been ignored by Program A, not only in FY 1964 when [ ] was allocated as opposed to [ ] requested, but that this trend of under-funding was being unfortunately continued in Fiscal Year 1965 when only [ ] was requested. He said that he felt that expenditures should be greater than the [ ] by a factor of perhaps as much as 3. He indicated that he would press for such increased funding in conferences with the DOD.

d. Mr. McCone said that he wanted DD/S&T to develop a construction program for CORONA improvements, and that if such a program flew in the face of the recommendations of the Purcell Panel, he for one would not be greatly disturbed, providing the rationale was proper. Dr. Wheelon explained that he had requested [ ] for the commencement of studies leading to an isolation of the problem confronting anyone attempting to improve CORONA, and the Director said he felt that this should move forward immediately. It was obvious, however, that there is no money specifically identified in the FY 1965 budget for such a program, and that until some definition of responsibilities occurs, the Director, Program A, probably regards himself as the proper person to implement such a program.

e. The Director said that he felt we should force for a completely new search system as the next generation vehicle beyond the CORONA. While he did not directly challenge Dr. Wheelon's views that the total of slightly more than [ ] programmed by General Greer for the several versions of [ ] was too much, he did indicate that he wanted us to come forth with a constructive detailed program with dollars attached for this new satellite search system, and that it should be based upon a comparison on conceptual approaches on [ ] and the new search system. In this context he stated that if we furnished him with such a proposal, he would see that D/NRO not only furnished the necessary funds to press for such development, but that the responsibility and technical monitoring of such a proposal would be allocated to this Agency under Program B.

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f. In discussing the [ ] effort, Mr. McCone said that he generally favored vehicles of the same configuration falling under a single management in this case OXCART, and he confirmed the fact that he desired one of the [ ] aircraft to be made available to the OXCART Project as a replacement for Article No. 123 destroyed in flight on May 23, 1963. He did not seem impatient on this point, and I think regarded it as a somewhat tiresome administrative detail.

3. Aside from the above items, the majority of the discussion in the meeting revolved around Mr. McCone's theory that the NRO agreement was binding on two Agencies as opposed to a single one, and that he felt we should spend more time pre-empting our position with regard to NRO by ideas and less time complaining about projects and programs which may have been pulled out from under us. It was clear, however, that he was anything but pleased with the actual manner in which the Air Force--CIA interface was working out.

[ ]  
JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
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(Special Activities)

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